Sri Perumalswami Reddi, will bear witness to the fact that this tank and channel are getting silted up and require urgent attention."

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" I shall be glad to do so, Sir."

Improvement to the Buckingham canal

* 349 *Q*.—SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(*a*) what steps have been taken by Government to deepen and improve the Buckingham Canal; and

(*b*) whether the Government propose to introduce steam launch service in the Buckingham Canal from Madras to places of interest like Tiruporur, Mahabalipuram, etc.?

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" (*a*) Several schemes for deepening and widening the canal were considered in the past but were dropped as being too costly. A scheme for carrying out improvements to the North Buckingham Canal at an approximate cost of Rs. 20 lakhs has been recommended by this Government now for inclusion in the Second Five-Year Plan.

"(*b*) No, Sir."

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM :—" Have the Government considered the possibility of developing the canal for the transport of passengers and also for the transport of goods and to work this up as a more efficient inland waterway in this region? "

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" Yes, Sir. That is only found to be very expensive. Various schemes such as widening the canal to 40' bed width and deepening it to the level of 14-00 for the portion 0/0 to 196-2 of North Buckingham Canal costing about Rs. 93 lakhs and two other schemes costing about Rs. 38 lakhs and 27 lakhs respectively, were considered before. These proposals were dropped due to lack of finance and due to their initial unremunerative nature. It was thought that as in the parallel roads running along this canal fast moving vehicles are available, people will not take to waterways—either passengers or even goods—and it was considered that it would be a dead loss."

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM :—" In view of the costly scheme referred to by the Hon. Minister, may I know if the Government have got any scheme under consideration to revitalise the indigenous boat industry by investigating into the present condition of boatmen who have been in this trade all along and instituting needy measures of relief to the boatmen? "

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" I shall have the suggestion considered."

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SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM :—" With reference to the answer given to clause (b) of the question, may I know whether the Government have received any proposal from the Regional Tourist Advisory Committee and will the Government consider the feasibility of introducing pleasure boats between Madras and Mahabalipuram for week-end service at least as an experiment and as an attraction to tourists and others? "

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" I have no information about any representations having been made by the Tourist Advisory Committee or anybody for the matter of that about pleasure cruising which the hon. Member has been mentioning."

3-20 p.m. SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN :—" Is the Hon. Minister aware that areas abutting the Buckingham Canal in the City of Madras are in the dirtiest condition possible? "

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" The other day I answered a question about clearing the foul odour, etc. I do not know what steps the Corporation is now taking."

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN :—" Since for carrying out improvements the question of finance comes in the way, may I appeal to the Hon. Minister to close the Buckingham Canal once for all? " (Laughter.)

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" I am afraid it may not be possible. We will try to remove the foul odour and other things."

SRI A. GAJAPATHY NAYAGAR :—" May I know where this Buckingham Canal begins and where it ends? "

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" I have no knowledge about it. But I know that we have got about 100 miles of this Buckingham Canal running in the residuary Madras State."

SRI V. CHAKKARAI CHETTY :—" May I know when the Corporation of Madras has suggested the deepening of this canal? I know this question came up for consideration when I was a member of the Corporation some 15 years ago. Is that request still pending with the Government? "

THE HON. SRI R. SHANMUGA RAJESWARA SETHUPATHI :—" That has been going on. They have been pouring out water. That is a different scheme. But, as I answered a question the other day, this question, viz., removing the foul odour emanating from the canal, is engaging the attention of both the Corporation of Madras and the Government now and more tangible results might be seen in a short period."